

APPENDIX I: RURAL DENTIST PROGRAM FACT SHEET

South Carolina AHEC Rural Dentist Program
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Financial Assistance Programs
Rural Dentist Program Fact Sheet

Overview:

The Rural Dentist Program, in coordination with the Department of Health and Environmental Control's Public Health Dentistry Program, is established at the Medical University of South Carolina. The funds appropriated to the Medical University of South Carolina for the Rural Dentist Program shall be administered by the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium physician recruitment office. The Medical University of South Carolina is responsible for the fiscal management of funds to ensure that state policies and guidelines are adhered to.

Board:

While this program is administered by South Carolina AHEC, a Board is created to manage and allocate these funds to insure the location of licensed dentists in rural areas of South Carolina and on the faculty of the College of Dental Medicine at MUSC. The Board will be composed of the following: The Dean, or his Designee, of the MUSC College of Dental Medicine; three members from the South Carolina Dental Education Foundation Board who represent rural areas; and the President of the South Carolina Dental Association. The Director of DHEC's Office of Primary Care; the Director or his designee of the Department of Health and Human Services; and the Executive Director of the South Carolina Dental Association shall serve as ex-officio members without vote.

Priority:

The intent of this program is to assist dentists in repaying educational loans in order that they may practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or serve as full-time faculty at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine, without the financial burden of unpaid educational loans. The Board expects that during the commitment period, the dentists will either establish viable practices and become involved in their communities, so that they will continue practicing in the area after the funding period is over or will establish viable academic careers at the College of Dental Medicine. Priority for this program will be given to those demonstrating need and expressing honest intent to remain in the underserved area once funding is completed or are in an area of critical need at the College of Dental Medicine. Attached is the "Rural Dentist Program Eligibility Criteria".

Application Process:

Applications will be accepted at any time. Interested persons must apply by May 15th for consideration for the next funding cycle that begins July 1, 2006. Applicants must identify the community in which they wish to practice or are currently practicing. Applications will also be accepted from dentists who wish to serve on the faculty at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine. Applications should include letters of endorsement from the community. Letters that communicate the need for dental services in the area will be given additional weight.

Applications should also include, where applicable, letters that demonstrate a community's

investment in the prospective practice. Examples of Community Investment include financial assistance provided by local government, agencies or organizations; purchase of equipment; the provision of office space; or other types of tangible financial support.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Eligibility Criteria for the Rural Dentist Program (attached) which reflect the selective weight assigned for each category.

Contract:

Accepted dentists will sign a contract with S.C. AHEC and MUSC to practice in an underserved area or teach at the MUSC College of Dental Medicine, for a designated amount of time. The terms of the contract stipulate that all participants will be expected to treat at least 100 unduplicated Medicaid patients. When contracts are signed, it will be noted that the continuation of the contract is contingent upon the continued availability of state funds.

Payment:

Loan reimbursement payments are made quarterly and cover the amount of all canceled loan repayment checks submitted to the S. C. AHEC (dated within the quarter); or the dentist can provide S. C. AHEC with the proper information needed to access his/her loans online and these can be paid directly by the S. C. AHEC

Penalty for Default:

If the dentist fails to execute the full terms of the contract, the Rural Dentist Program Board will determine the appropriate disposition. The penalty may be up to a triple repayment of all money received plus interest at the prime rate plus 10% as of the day of default (plus any legal fees and costs necessary to collect the money). In the case of pregnancy, extended leave during which the dentist does not serve as a full time dentist or special circumstances, a period of time equal to the extended leave shall be added to the contract period.

Special Cases:

Applicants with any other type of service commitment will be considered individually by the Board for eligibility to participate in this program.

Additional Information Needed:

Prior to approval of any dentist, he/she will be required to provide information from the National Practitioner Data Bank and submit to a criminal background check.